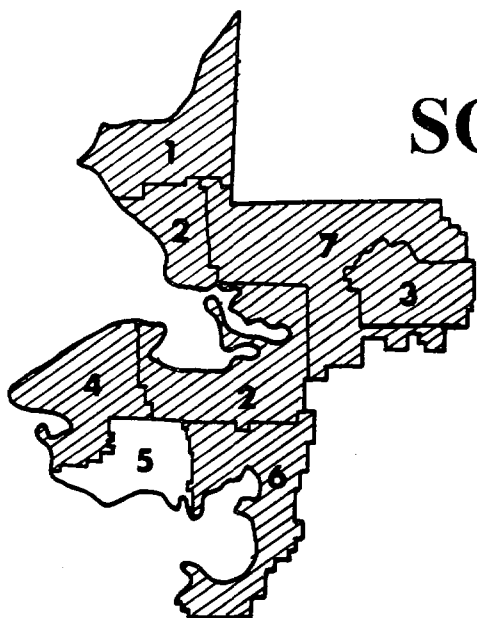


# Management Unit 5: SOUTHWEST SEWARD PENINSULA



## Background

**Location and Land Ownership.** This management unit includes land within drainages surrounding the north side of Norton Sound. Major waterways include the Sinuk, Nome, Eldorado, Solomon, Casadepaga, and Fish rivers. The unit also extends north along the Kougarok Road (Nome to Taylor). Most of the unit is gently rolling coastal lowlands. The tidelands of the unit extend from near Cape Woolley to Cape Darby, and include Golovnin Bay and Golovnin Lagoon.

Most of the land is state owned or selected, with large areas of overlapping state and Native selections. The northeast portion of the unit is in federal ownership, including BLM lands and the Bering Land Bridge National Preserve. Parts of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge are within the boundaries of this unit. There are municipal uplands and tidelands in the City of Nome, and private lands belonging to the Sitenasuak, King Island, Solomon, White Mountain, Golovin, and Bering Straits Native corporations. Over half the coastline of the unit is Native owned. However, the coastline from Safety Sound to Rocky Point includes some state-owned

and state-selected lands. State ownership also includes the tidelands, except at Nome, and the beds of navigable rivers. Several parcels of private land within this unit include Native allotments and patented mining claims.

**Resources and Land Uses.** The communities in this area--Nome, Solomon, Council, White Mountain, and Golovin--were established as mining towns. Solomon and Council are, for the most part, seasonal settlements. Mining has taken place since the late 1800s; the Fish River mining district was the first organized mining district in northwest Alaska. Many historic sites in this area are associated with past mining activity. Placer gold mining is a major land use in this area.

Residents currently use lands in this area for hunting land and sea mammals, subsistence and commercial fishing and crabbing, berry-picking, and reindeer herding. Most of the land is covered with low tundra and shrubs, which is good reindeer and moose habitat. This unit includes extensive wetlands--particularly north of Golovnin Lagoon and Safety Sound--that are important waterfowl nesting habitat. There is a

There is a small amount of forest land in the eastern part of the unit.

**Access.** Access to this unit is by air, sea, roads, or trails. Airports exist at Council, Golovin, Solomon, and White Mountain. Remote landing areas for small planes are scattered throughout the unit. Boats are used mostly along the coast, in Safety Sound, Golovnin Bay and Golovnin Lagoon, and on the Niukluk, Pilgrim, Sinuk, and Fish rivers. Roads within the unit extend from Nome north to Taylor, east to Council, and northwest to Teller. Numerous trails, including the historic Iditarod Trail, provide local access. Many trails originated as mining routes.

## Management Intent

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**General.** This unit will be managed for a variety of uses. Nearly all state land will be kept in public ownership. State uplands and tidelands will be managed for multiple use, primarily mining, fish and wildlife habitat and harvest, reindeer grazing, recreation, and subsistence. Opportunities for private use of state land will be offered through four land disposals over the next 20 years. Approximately 900 acres will be offered for sale in three areas north of Nome: Pilgrim, Christian Creek, and Golden Gate Creek. Actual acreage in each unit may be adjusted up or down as the land disposals are developed. Remote cabin permits will be allowed at very low densities in the upper Sinuk River drainage. State-owned shorelands will be managed consistent with the general management intent described on page 3-4.

Nearly all state land will remain open to mineral entry. Land within proposed disposal areas will be closed to new mineral entry prior to sale. Uplands and tidelands adjacent to six important seabird rookeries along the coast from Safety Sound to Rocky Point will be closed to new mineral entry to protect nesting areas.

**Subunits.** There are 9 subunits in the Southwest Seward Peninsula management unit: 5a (habitat and harvest tidelands), 5b (general use uplands) 5c (mineral/habitat and harvest lands), 5d (mineral lands), 5e, 5h, and 5i (settlement), 5f (general use tidelands), and 5g (habitat and harvest uplands). The general management intent for these subunits is described on pages 3-4 to 3-6.

The *Resource Information Summary* chart for this unit highlights important resource values found in each subunit. The summary is based on information from various resource reports prepared for the plan (see appendices C and D).

The *Land Use Designation Summary* chart for this unit provides a quick picture of planned uses for each subunit. For a complete description of management policy, the chart must be used with the statement of management intent and the management guidelines.

**Coastal Plans.** Portions of this unit are within the Bering Straits and Nome coastal management plan boundaries and affected areas. Activities on state land within this unit will be managed consistent with the applicable coastal

## Important Use Area

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## Subunit

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Pilgrim River/Salmon Lake

5g - habitat and harvest uplands, and  
5c - minerals/habitat and harvest lands

Safety Sound, Golovnin Bay/Lagoon,  
and the Niukluk and Fish Rivers

5a - habitat and harvest tidelands,  
5f - general use tidelands, and  
5g - habitat and harvest uplands

Kuzitrin River Wetlands

5g - habitat and harvest uplands

Nome River

5d - mineral lands,  
5c - minerals/habitat and harvest lands, and  
5g - habitat and harvest uplands

management plan. State land is also located in the following Important Use Areas identified in the coastal management plans (see maps in Appendix J). These areas have special policies which apply through the Bering Straits Coastal Management Plan.

Several Areas Meriting Special Attention (AMSAs) are recommended in the Bering Straits Coastal Management Program. When AMSA plans are adopted for these areas, state land management will also be consistent with AMSA policies. AMSAs proposed in this unit include Golovnin Bay, Rocky Point, Safety Sound, Cape Nome, Nome River, and Pilgrim River/Salmon Lake.

## Management Guidelines

**Aleutian Tern Nesting Habitat (Subunits 5a, 5b, and 5g).** In Safety Sound, all land use activities that would disturb nesting Aleutian terns or detrimentally alter nesting habitat will be avoided to the extent feasible and prudent. Where these activities are authorized, they will be conducted to minimize disturbance to nesting Aleutian terns or detrimental alteration of habitat. Leases or permits may include seasonal restrictions on activities to avoid impacts. DF&G will be consulted to identify current or potential nesting habitat, and to determine guidelines for mitigating any impacts.

**Bird Rookeries and Subsurface Resources (Subunits 5a, 5b, and 5g).** The coast along the southern shore of the Seward Peninsula contains some of the largest seabird colonies on the peninsula. Peregrine falcons also nest in this area. At Bluff, bird populations range from 40,000 to 90,000. About 75 percent of the nesting birds are murres. These seabirds feed offshore near the colonies. Offshore waters support large concentrations of sand lance--a vital food source for fish-eating seabirds. The reproductive success for some seabirds depends on availability of sand lance, availability of nesting habitat, and nondisturbance.

Most state land in these subunits remains open to new mineral entry. However, within one-quarter mile of six important seabird colonies, state tidelands with high mineral potential and state uplands will be closed to new mineral entry to protect this important habitat. For two colonies--Chiukak and Rocky Point--state uplands within one-quarter mile will be closed to

new mineral entry (Subunit 5b). For the two seabird colonies on non-state uplands at Topkok Head and Bluff, a quarter-mile radius of tidelands with high mineral potential will be closed to new mineral entry (Subunit 5a). State upland and tideland within one-quarter mile of the seabird colonies at Topkok and Eldorado Creek will be closed to new mineral entry (subunits 5a, 5b, and 5g). These sites are shown on the *Subsurface Designation Summary Map*, page 2-51 and in detail in Appendix H, *Mineral Orders for the Northwest Area Plan*. For other guidelines that apply to bird rookeries or state land within this management unit, see *Fish and Wildlife Habitat Guideline K*, page 2-8.

**Commercial Recreation (Subunits 5a, 5b, 5f, and 5g).** *Public and Commercial Recreation*, Guideline D, page 2-23, describes state management for commercial recreation. For these subunits, this guideline prohibits commercial recreation leasing in the following areas: 19 anadromous stream mouths or enclosed estuaries, 2 marine mammal haulouts, and 9 seabird rookeries, shown on the management unit map.

**Land Disposal (Subunits 5e, 5h, and 5i).** Four settlement areas are designated in the Southwest Seward Peninsula Management Unit: Christian Creek (5e) will be available for a net disposal of approximately 650 acres of land; Pilgrim (5h) will be available for a net disposal of approximately 100 acres of land, and the Golden Gate (5i) will be available for a net disposal of approximately 150 acres. For each land sale, a five year extension will be added to the existing statutory timing for subdivision of parcels.

Most of the Pilgrim area (gross acreage) is likely to be reconveyed to the Bering Straits Native Corporation (BSNC). All of the Golden Gate area is on overlapping selections with BSNC, and could be conveyed to them.

During the design phase of these disposals, Bering Straits Coastal Resource Service Area, Bering Straits Native Corporation, and the DNR Division of Mining should be consulted. Existing mineral closures for previously proposed disposal areas - Grand Central and Pilgrim - will be re-evaluated. Additionally, DNR staff should be present in Nome prior to, and during, the disposals.

**Pacing.** Because of concerns about impacts on community lifestyles or resources, these land offerings should be phased over a number of years:

Disposal	Offer After	Acres	Parcels
Christian Creek	1990	650	all available parcels
Golden Gate I	1995	80	1/2 available parcels
Pilgrim	2000	100	all available parcels
Golden Gate II	2005	70	all remaining parcels
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>900</b>	

**Pilgrim River Setback.** The Pilgrim River is an important stream for red salmon spawning, rearing, and migration. This is the northernmost known migration of red salmon, and the only red salmon spawning area in the planning area. For Subunit 5h, there will be a quarter-mile staking setback from the ordinary high water mark on the Pilgrim River; the buffer will be retained in public ownership and managed for wildlife habitat. When the land disposal process is developed, land one-quarter mile either side of Pilgrim River will be reclassified as wildlife habitat land. Public notice for the reclassification will be simultaneous with public notice for the sale.

**Mouths of Anadromous Streams, or Enclosed Estuaries (Subunits 5a, 5b, 5f, and 5g).** *Fish and Wildlife Habitat* Guideline J, page 2-8, describes state management for mouths of anadromous streams and narrow openings of enclosed estuaries such as lagoons, inlets, or basins. These stream mouths and estuaries are shown on the management unit maps. For many of these stream mouths and estuaries, the location of the opening is dynamic, and the guideline will apply to their location at the time of a proposed action. Within these subunits, this guideline applies to the following areas:

#### *Anadromous Streams*

Bonanza River  
Saunders River  
Cheenik River  
Silverbow Creek  
Cripple River  
Sinuk River  
Eldorado River  
Snake River  
Fish River (three mouths)  
Solomon River  
Kachauik River  
Topkok River  
Nome River  
Yuonglik River  
Penny River

#### *Enclosed Estuaries*

Golovnin Lagoon  
Safety Sound

**Remote Cabin Permits (Subunits 5b and 5g).** The Sinuk River is identified for remote cabin permits. The following area is open to four remote cabin permits:

**T8S, R35W, KRM, E1/2; T8S, R34W, KRM, W1/2**

**General.** The complete set of areawide guidelines is presented in Chapter 2. The *Resource Information Summary* charts for this unit identify important trails, known or probable heritage sites, and other resource values in specific subunits that are addressed by the appropriate guidelines in Chapter 2. Any of the Chapter 2 guidelines could apply to certain uses within this management unit. Those that are most likely to apply are

- Coordination and public notice
- Fish and wildlife habitat
- Forestry
- Grazing
- Heritage resources
- Lakeshore management
- Public access
- Public and commercial recreation
- Remote cabins and trapping cabins
- Settlement
- Stream corridors and instream flow
- Subsurface resources
- Trail management



# RESOURCE INFORMATION SUMMARY

## Management Unit 5: Southwest Seward Peninsula - Page 1 of 3

RESOURCE	SUBUNIT			
	5a	5b	5c	5d
<b>Fire Protection</b>	Full	Full	Full	Mostly full; moderate north of Kuzitrin River.
<b>Fish and Wildlife</b>	A1: nine seabird rookeries and nine anadromous stream mouths; A2: ducks & geese brown bear, moose, herring in Golovnin Lagoon; marine mammals, marine fish.	A1: five seabird rookeries. Mostly B2, some C.	A2/B1/B2: moose, anadromous fish, ducks & geese, brown bear.	Mostly B2, some C.
<b>Forestry</b>	Driftwood	Trees in Fish River drainage (east end of unit).	None	None
<b>Heritage Resources</b>	Known coastal sites: Rocky Pt. to Topkok, Golovnin Lagoon, and Safety Sound.	Known sites: near Eldorado and Canyon Creek.	Nome Historic Mining District; known sites near Ruby.	Known sites: east of Nome area and near Canyon Creek.
<b>Important Trails</b>	Iditarod Trail; Golovnin Bay winter trail; Golovin to White Mountain winter trail; Safety Sound trails.	Iditarod Trail; Nome to Shishmaref winter trail; Sinuk River trail; Penny River trail; Bluff to White Mountain winter trail; Solomon R. to Casadapaga R.	Nome River trail; Casadapaga and Niukluk Rivers; American Creek to Iron Creek; Pilgrim River.	Nome to Eldorado R. trails; Casadapaga R. to Iron Creek; American Creek to Iron Creek.
<b>Minerals</b>	Moderate to very high on coast; Golovnin Bay, low to moderate; some mining claims along coast.	Low to very high; numerous mining claims.	High to very high; mining claims in many active claim blocks.	High to very high; mining claims in many active claim blocks.
<b>Oil &amp; Gas</b>	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
<b>Public Access</b>	Boat along coast and up Fish R.; floatplane in protected areas.	Nome-Taylor, Teller, Council, Ruby roads; Iditarod Trail in east end; local trails.	Nome-Taylor Road; plane landings in upper Niukluk; local trails along rivers.	Nome road system; plane landings in upper block; local trails along river.
<b>Recreation</b>	Along coast, Topkok to Bluff; upper Golovnin Lagoon.	Scenic views and recreation potential in the Kigluaik Mts.	Along Niukluk R. and Fish R.	Unknown
<b>Reindeer Grazing</b>	N/A	Fawning areas: Eldorado Creek, Kwiktalik Mt., Ptarmigan Creek; some winter range.	Some winter range.	Mostly winter range.
<b>Settlement Suitability</b>	N/A	Low along rivers, rest unsuitable.	Low along rivers, rest unsuitable.	Low along rivers, rest unsuitable.
<b>Subsistence</b>	Subsistence use in this unit has been documented by studies of the DF&G, Subsistence Division, for the communities of Shishmaref and Brevig Mission. Subsistence use by other communities—such as Nome, Teller, Mary's Igloo, Wales, White Mountain, Council, and Golovin—is known to exist, but the extent of their use has not been documented in studies for the NWAP.			

See Appendix C for a list of reports with more detailed information, and Appendix D for definition of ratings.

# RESOURCE INFORMATION SUMMARY

## Management Unit 5: Southwest Seward Peninsula - Page 2 of 3

RESOURCE	SUBUNIT		
	5e	5f	5g
<b>Fire Protection</b>	Full	Full	Mostly full; modified north of Kuzitrin R.
<b>Fish and Wildlife</b>	B1: anadromous fish or resident fish, moose winter range; upgraded due to human use (Brevig area). B2: moose, brown bear.	A1: eight mouths of anadromous streams. A2: marine mammals, marine fish, ducks & geese, anadromous fish, brown bear, moose.	A1: three seabird rookeries and three mouths of anadromous fish streams. A/2/B1: moose, anadromous fish, ducks & geese, brown bear.
<b>Forestry</b>	None	Driftwood	Trees along Morris Creek (east end).
<b>Heritage Resources</b>	Unknown	All coastal areas have known cultural values, especially the Snake, Sinuk and Nome R. corridors and Cape Nome.	Known sites: near Ruby, and the Eldorado, Sinuk and Flambeau R.
<b>Important Trails</b>	Grand Central R. trail; trail along Nome-Taylor Road	Coastal trails.	Nome to Shishmaref winter trail; Sinuk River trail; Penny River trail; Bluff to White Mountain winter trail; Bonanza River, Eldorado River, Flambeau River.
<b>Minerals</b>	High to moderate potential; some mining claims.	Low to very high; some mining claims along coast.	Mostly moderate, some low and high; some mining claims.
<b>Oil &amp; Gas</b>	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
<b>Public Access</b>	Kougarok Road.	Boat along coast.	Nome-Taylor, Council, Pilgrim Hot Springs, and Teller Roads; landings at Tajata Creek, Salmon Lake and upper Niukluk; local trails; boat on lower rivers.
<b>Recreation</b>	Along Nome R.	N/A	Along road and major rivers, especially Niukluk R.; scenic views and recreation potential in the Kigluaik Mts. and Mt. Osborne.
<b>Reindeer Grazing</b>	Winter range.	N/A	Fawning areas: Eldorado Creek, Kwiktalik Mts., Ptarmigan Creek; some winter range.
<b>Settlement Suitability</b>	Low		Mixed low and unsuitable.
<b>Subsistence</b>	Subsistence use in this unit has been documented by studies of the DF&G, Subsistence Division, for the communities of Shishmaref and Brevig Mission. Subsistence use by other communities--such as Nome, Teller, Mary's Igloo, Wales, White Mountain, Council, and Golovin--is known to exist, but the extent of their use has not been documented in studies for the NWAP.		

See Appendix C for a list of reports with more detailed information, and Appendix D for definition of ratings.



# **RESOURCE INFORMATION SUMMARY** **Management Unit 5: Southwest Seward Peninsula - Page 3 of 3**

RESOURCE	SUBUNIT	
	5h	5i
<b>Fire Protection</b>	Full	Full
<b>Fish and Wildlife</b>	B1 along Salmon Lake and Pilgrim River; rest B2/C: moose, anadromous and resident fish.	B1: moose, anadromous fish, brown bear.
<b>Forestry</b>	None	None
<b>Heritage Resources</b>	Known sites: Pilgrim Hot Springs, Salmon Lake.	Nome Historic Mining District.
<b>Important Trails</b>	Pilgrim River trail	Nome River trail
<b>Minerals</b>	Very High; some mining claims.	High
<b>Oil &amp; Gas</b>	Unknown	Unknown
<b>Public Access</b>	Kougarok Road; trail/boat along Pilgrim River.	Teller Highway; boat along Nome River.
<b>Recreation</b>	Unknown	Along river.
<b>Reindeer Grazing</b>	Some winter range in SW corner; rest nothing.	Winter range.
<b>Settlement Suitability</b>	Low	Low
<b>Subsistence</b>	Subsistence use in this unit has been documented by studies of the DF&G, Subsistence Division, for the communities of Shishmaref and Brevig Mission. Subsistence use by other communities—such as Nome, Teller, Mary's Igloo, Wales, White Mountain, Council, and Golovin—is known to exist, but the extent of their use has not been documented in studies for the NWAP.	

See Appendix C for a list of reports with more detailed information, and Appendix D for definition of ratings.

## LAND-USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY

### MANAGEMENT UNIT 5 - SOUTHWEST SEWARD PENINSULA

SUBUNIT	LAND USE DESIGNATIONS			COMMENTS
	PRIMARY SURFACE USE <sup>1</sup>	PROHIBITED SURFACE USE <sup>2</sup>	SUBSURFACE <sup>3</sup>	
5a	Habitat & harvest tidelands	Remote cabins Commercial rec. leases in some areas	Open, except within 1/4 mile of 4 seabird rookeries	
5b	General use uplands	Land disposals Remote cabins except in the Sinuk River area Commercial rec. leases in some areas	Open, except within 1/4 mile of 3 seabird rookeries	
5c	Minerals/ Habitat and harvest lands	Land disposals Remote cabins	Open	
5d	Mineral lands	Land disposals Remote cabins	Open	
5e	Settlement	Remote cabins Commercial rec. leases in some areas	Closed prior to sale	Christian Creek 650 net acres
5f	General use tidelands	Remote cabins Commercial rec. leases in some areas	Open	
5g	Habitat & harvest uplands	Land disposals Remote cabins except in the Sinuk River area	Open, except within 1/4 mile of 1 seabird rookery	
5h	Settlement	Remote cabins Commercial rec. leases in some areas	Closed prior to sale	Pilgrim 100 net acres
5i	Settlement	Remote cabins Commercial rec. leases in some areas	Closed prior to sale	Golden Gate 150 net acres

<sup>1</sup>Secondary uses include: forestry in subunits 5b and 5g; reindeer grazing in all subunits except 5a and 5f; recreation in subunits 5a, 5c, 5e, 5g, and 5i.

<sup>2</sup>Other uses such as material sales, land leases, or permits, that are not specifically prohibited may be allowed. Such uses will be allowed if consistent with the management intent statement, the management guidelines of this unit, and the relevant management guidelines listed in Chapter 2.

<sup>3</sup>All areas are available for leasing for leasable minerals. Statements of whether or not the unit is open to mineral entry refer only to locatable minerals. See glossary in Appendix A for definitions of leasable and locatable minerals. See Appendix H for detailed descriptions of areas closed to mineral entry.



LEGEND

- Management Unit Boundary
- 5a Subunit Boundary
- No Pattern State Owned
- + + State Selected
- Native Owned
- Native Selected
- Native/State Selected
- Federal
- Privately Owned
- X Marine Mammal Haulouts
- Bird Rookeries
- ▲ Anadromous Stream Mouths or Enclosed Estuaries

